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VOGE: EPA owes Wyoming an explanation **Casper Star-Tribune - Online**

01/20/2013

VOGE: EPA owes Wyoming an explanation

2013-01-20T11:30:00Z 2013-01-19T16:05:18Z VOG: EPA owes Wyoming an explanation

By ADAM VOG

Star-Tribune energy reporter

Casper Star-Tribune Online

It's been the main event on Wyoming's energy and environmental fight card for at least a year now.

Standing in the blue corner, from Washington, D.C., the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, armed with a December 2011 report tentatively linking hydraulic fracturing to groundwater contamination in west-central Wyoming.

In the red corner, from Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Encana Oil and Gas. The company claims that the EPA's investigation of the area is unfocused, poorly executed and rushed.

The Pavillion fight has gone its 12 rounds with little resolution. So far, each judge's scorecard is different. But as we rounded a corner into 2013, the final bell appeared to be on the horizon.

A peer review panel was expected go over the data in January, and many hoped the panel would produce a firm answer about whether hydraulic fracturing, an oil and gas production technique in which producers pump water, sand and chemicals into the ground to break open rock and free up resources, had contaminated the area's groundwater.

But now we're facing another 12 rounds, and the EPA owes Wyoming an explanation.

If you missed it, the federal agency extended the comment period on its Pavillion groundwater contamination study earlier this month. The agency pushed back until September a deadline that would have likely been followed by the long-awaited peer review of EPA and U.S. Geological Survey data collected in the Pavillion Gas Field over about a two-year period.

The deadline extension followed a similar decision in October, when the EPA pushed back the comment deadline to allow more time for comments on new data.

Back then, such a decision seemed logical. The USGS data had barely been part of the report, and most people likely wouldn't have had time to go over it and submit a comment.

But the most recent delay doesn't seem as logical. The EPA has since said it wanted to allow more time for comments. It also said, in a prepared statement, that it will continue "outreach activities" including meeting with stakeholders and adding technical information to its previous report. The agency will also "take into account new data, further stakeholder input, and public comment as it continues to review the status of the Pavillion investigation and considers options for moving forward."

There's nothing wrong with being thorough. In this case, it's advisable. Reputations of companies and individuals hang in

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the balance.

But when the comment period expires in September, the agency will have accepted input on its draft report for a grand total of 21 months. In that time, landowners with bad water, a company with a red dot on its record and several state agencies have waited for an answer, and none have gotten it. That's too long to wait.

Maybe the EPA has in recent months discovered an unanswered question or set of data missing from its report. Maybe without that information, the investigation isn't complete.

But if that's the case, the agency needs to come out and say it. It's too easy, given the agency's previous statements, for detractors to wonder aloud if the agency is only stalling. Too many people are waiting, and most are frustrated.

There may only be two fighters in this bout, but plenty of others have taken a punch.

Every fight must end some time. And every fight has a winner and loser. It's time to ring the bell.

Reach energy reporter Adam Voge at 307-266-0561, or at adam.voge@trib.com. Read his blog at trib.com/news/opinion/blogs/boom or follow him on Twitter [@vogeCST](https://twitter.com/vogeCST).

Recommendations

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House Democrats push EPA to move faster on Pavillion EnergyWire

01/18/2013

Updated at 8:46 a.m. EST.

House Democrats have joined in a congressional chorus of criticism aimed at U.S. EPA's plan to delay an investigation into groundwater contamination near hydraulic fracturing sites in Wyoming.

Illinois Rep. Jan Schakowsky and 19 co-signers sent a letter today to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, urging her to speed up the agency's probe of water contamination from oil fields around Pavillion, Wyo.

After releasing hotly contested draft conclusions in late 2011, EPA has extended the public comment period a number of times, most recently announcing that a final report would not be released until September (E&ENews PM, Jan. 10).

"The people of Pavillion -- whose water is riddled with unsafe chemicals -- deserve faster action," the lawmakers wrote.

The Democrats' letter comes a day after a similar one from Republican Sens. David Vitter of Louisiana and James Inhofe of Oklahoma, who also railed on EPA's eight-month delay, accusing the agency of prioritizing politics over science in its investigation (EnergyWire, Jan. 17).

EPA's initial results in 2011 showed that fracking fluid was present in deep groundwater but not in shallower drinking water -- still giving environmentalists the high-profile case they needed to back up claims of fracking's harmful effects. But those results were questioned when the U.S. Geological Survey tried to do further testing from EPA's two monitoring wells and found that one of them was not up to USGS's testing standards.

Industry has charged EPA with conducting sloppy research to raise public concern over fracking, a well stimulation technique that pushes chemical-laced water and sand deep underground to loosen up oil and gas. The agency is in the middle of a nationwide study into fracking's safety.

"We are very disappointed in this delay, which we believe must be the last," the Democrats wrote in today's letter. "As we await your findings, we ask that your agency continue to work collaboratively with state, tribal, and local agencies, as well as impacted residents, to protect public health and the environment."

Co-signers to the letter are Reps. Earl Blumenauer (Ore.), Matt Cartwright (Pa.), Steve Cohen (Tenn.), John Conyers (Mich.), Pete DeFazio (Ore.), Sam Farr (Calif.), Raúl Grijalva (Ariz.), Mike Honda (Calif.), Rush Holt (N.J.), Jared Huffman (Calif.), Barbara Lee (Calif.), Jim McDermott (Wash.), Jerrold Nadler (N.Y.), Jared Polis (Colo.), Mike Quigley (Ill.), Charlie Rangel (N.Y.), Carol Shea-Porter (N.H.), Niki Tsongas (Mass.) and Maxine Waters (Calif.).

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GOP Faults Delayed EPA Fracking Study Inside EPA Weekly Report

01/18/2013

Republican senators are criticizing EPA for again delaying its draft study linking groundwater contamination in Wyoming to hydraulic fracturing fluids, saying the agency's decision to extend a public comment deadline allows critics to cite the 2011 draft report to push for strict new regulations.

EPA's delay "allows the Agency's unsubstantiated claims to remain unchecked" by allowing the draft report to remain in the public domain, Sens. David Vitter (R-LA), ranking member on the Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works and James Inhofe (R-OK) say in a Jan. 17 letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson.

The senators are also warning that the delay and other problems with EPA's Wyoming study raises doubts about the rigor of the agency's broader study of potential drinking water impacts related to fracking.

EPA in a Jan. 11 Federal Register notice extended the public comment period to Sept. 30 for its draft report, "Investigation of Ground Water Contamination near Pavillion, Wyoming" which the agency released Dec. 8, 2011. The draft report represents the first time the agency has publicly acknowledged that groundwater contamination of an aquifer was "likely" due to fracking chemicals.

Industry and Republican lawmakers have widely charged that the study is flawed, citing a host of concerns including that EPA's sampling methodology could have contributed to the contamination, that the agency ignored data showing evidence that contaminants were naturally occurring, and that the findings relied on data sets that are too narrow to support the draft conclusions.

In the Jan. 17 letter, the lawmakers reiterate previous criticisms of the draft report, which they say the agency has failed to address. "In light of the flawed process and lack of proper scientific analysis in EPA's initial draft report, along with the agency's continued mismanagement of the investigation, how can a credible final product possibly be salvaged?" they say.

Vitter and Inhofe also suggest that the draft Pavillion report raises questions about the agency's methodology for its larger, congressionally directed study seeking to examine the potential impacts of fracking on drinking water, saying "how can Congress and the public have any confidence in the results of this ongoing study?"

EPA Dec. 21 released an interim version of its broader study. While final results are slated for 2014, the interim report says the agency will not be completing two case studies to assess potential groundwater contamination at new fracking sites until after the broader study is completed.

Environmentalists have charged that the prospective case studies are needed because, as EPA said in the Pavillion draft report, cases like the Wyoming study highlight the need for baseline water quality data to better track whether fracking contributes to groundwater pollution.

An industry-funded analysis of the fracking study's scope, conducted by contractor Battelle and published in November 2011, said that a lack of baseline data in some of the retrospective case studies EPA had planned for sites where contamination had already occurred would be "likely to limit the scientific validity and usefulness of case study findings and may result in incorrect or flawed conclusions."

A spokesman for Encana, the energy company that drills near Pavillion, has already criticized the delay, saying in a Jan.

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11 statement that, as the third extension to the comment deadline, the announcement is disappointing and a “disservice not only to Encana, but to the people of Pavillion and the state of Wyoming.”

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New Vitter, Inhofe Call EPA's Report on Hydraulic Fracturing in Wyoming a Failure Bignews.biz

01/18/2013

Suggest EPA's third delay of this report is signal the process, science were flawed

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forward by State of Wyoming officials and various stakeholders.

The additional eight month delay, further illustrates that the EPA's initial findings failed to be based on sound credible science, and hastily rushed out the door for political purposes. The citizens of Pavillion and the State of Wyoming, as well as industry stakeholders, maintain a compelling interest in ensuring EPA conducts the investigation in a scientific and transparent manner, which up to this point the Agency avoided.

Friday's announcement allows the Agency's unsubstantiated claims to remain unchecked in order to justify an Administration-wide effort to hinder and unnecessarily regulate hydraulic fracturing on the federal level. In this case, the unexpected and unusually long extension in this seemingly never-ending process appears to be based solely on the Agency's desire to ignore transparency requirements while allowing the report's flawed assertions to remain in the public domain.

The Agency has failed to address significant concerns raised with the process and conclusions of the draft report, including:

- Why EPA ignored multiple data sources in its draft report that document long-standing, naturally occurring problems such as high sodium, high sulfate, and naturally produced methane gas with groundwater in the Pavillion area;
- Numerous documented instances of poor quality sampling and laboratory methods in which even blank samples were routinely contaminated;
- The use of a very limited and incomplete data sets to draw technically inadequate conclusions;
- Reliance on data from two EPA monitoring wells – neither of which tested the water quality in the aquifers used by residents – that were completed in natural gas reservoirs;
- Failure to ensure integrity in EPA's monitoring wells where many organic and synthetic organic chemicals that were detected were likely introduced during the drilling, completion, testing, and sampling phases;
- Failure of EPA to follow United States Geological Survey recommendations for monitoring well drilling and sampling;
- Failure of the Agency to adequately recognize the local geology and hydrogeology of the Wind River Formation;
- Failure of EPA to rule out or study possible other sources of groundwater contamination; and

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- Focusing the report entirely on hydraulic fracturing while failing to address the needs of the landowner's water supply issues.

Given the controversy surrounding the report, including the concerns raised above, and the continued availability of the draft report, we request prompt responses on the following questions:

1. In light of the flawed process and lack of proper scientific analysis in EPA's initial draft report, along with the Agency's continued mismanagement of the investigation, how can a credible final product possibly be salvaged?
2. While EPA has been investigating water quality issues and their possible relationship to hydraulic fracturing in Pavillion, WY, the Agency began crafting a larger study on the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources. This larger study applies similar methodologies to those of the Agency in Pavillion as well as the suspect processes used in other erroneous investigations in Dimock, PA, and Parker County, TX. Based on this record, how can

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Vitter, Inhofe Call EPA's Report on Hydraulic Fracturing in Wyoming a Failure Bignews.biz

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BigNews.Biz - Jan 18,2013 - Vitter, Inhofe Call EPA's Report on Hydraulic Fracturing in Wyoming a Failure

Suggest EPA's third delay of this report is signal the process, science were flawed

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Sens. David Vitter (R-La.) and Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) called on Environment Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson to answer questions about the science used in a hydraulic fracturing report in Wyoming. The Senators highlight missteps and setbacks with the EPA's draft report, and they demand an explanation before the report is used to inform any future actions or potential regulations. Vitter and Inhofe also suggest this report is fundamentally flawed and not to be considered credible.

"It's not often you see the EPA have to delay a report for a third time," Vitter said. "Unfortunately, it's all too often to see them using flawed science for political purposes. In this case, we want to make sure their failed report doesn't set back the positive progress with hydraulic fracturing – arguably the brightest spot in our otherwise slumping economy."

"I have had major concerns about this report from the very beginning," said Inhofe. "Using shoddy science to pursue an agenda that prevents America from responsibly using our own energy resources is unacceptable. It damages our own energy independence at a time when the nation is on the verge of outpacing countries like Saudi Arabia with the natural gas industry leading the way. These wrong-headed efforts to over regulate this important sector of our economy would mean lost jobs, lost revenues, and increased costs for every American family."

The EPA produced a draft report in December 2011 on the impact hydraulic fracturing had on ground water near Pavillion, Wyoming. Their report has been criticized for being premature, and the EPA has delayed the comment period three separate times. The most recent comment period was supposed to end on January 15, 2013, however, it has been delayed for another eight months. Vitter and Inhofe suggest the delay illustrates that the EPA used flawed science in their report.

The text of the Senators' letter is below.

January 17, 2013

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Matt Mead, Wyoming Governor, Speaks Out Against EPA Extension Of Groundwater Comment Period Huffington Post, The

01/18/2013

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead has joined those expressing disappointment that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has extended for a third time a public comment period on a report on groundwater pollution in a Wyoming gas field rather than moving toward wrapping up the study.

The comment period was supposed to end Tuesday. Last week, the EPA announced it would be extended to Sept. 30. That could postpone independent experts' formal review of the December, 2011, report by another eight months or more.

"Wyoming did not ask for this delay nor do we want it. This does not move us toward resolving the concerns of the landowners in the area," Mead said in a statement released Wednesday.

The report on the EPA's findings in the Pavillion area marked the first time the federal agency blamed hydraulic fracturing for a specific case of groundwater pollution. Fracking involves pumping water, sand and chemicals into oil and gas wells to fracture open rock formations and increase the flow of oil and gas.

The report widened the gap between environmentalists who characterize fracking as a threat to clean groundwater and petroleum industry officials who insist fracking is safe. Both sides agree on one thing: The comment period extension is unnecessary.

Doug Hock, spokesman for Calgary-based Encana, which owns the gas field in the Pavillion area in west-central Wyoming, said by email: "There's no credible reason for further delay."

Those with polluted well water "continue to suffer the effects of living in a contaminated environment" while peer review is delayed, John Fenton, chairman of the group Pavillion Area Concerned Citizens, said in a release last week.

Contacted by email Wednesday, EPA Region 8 spokesman Rich Mylott would not respond to the governor's remarks. He also did not answer a question about the EPA's plans for peer review of the report.

He reiterated part of a prepared statement the EPA released to reporters who asked about the extension.

"The Agency will take into account new data, further stakeholder input, and public comment as it continues to review the status of the Pavillion investigation and considers options for moving forward," Mylott wrote, adding that he had no more information to provide.

The comment period began on Dec. 14, 2011, and was extended twice last year.

The first extension was last March, after the state and EPA agreed to collaborate on further groundwater testing. The second extension was in October, soon after those new test results — which were similar to the results of EPA's earlier testing — came out.

In a Saturday Oct. 13, 2012 photo, Amanda McCracken, of Big Stone Gap, stands with her children, Kaylee, 6, and Pryston, 8, at Saturday's United for Coal demonstration in support of her husband and their father, who is a coal miner. Only a few generations ago, coal miners were literally at war with their employers, spilling and shedding blood on West Virginia's Blair Mountain in a historic battle for union representation and fair treatment. Today, their descendants are allies

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in a carefully choreographed rhetorical war playing out across eastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia and all of West Virginia. It's fueled by a single, unrelenting message that they now face a common enemy _ the federal government _ that has decided that coal is no longer king, or even noble. (AP Photo/Bristol Herald Courier, Allie Robinson)

In this April 2010 photo, miners watch as a piece of equipment passes by in the Tech Leasing and Rebuild Inc. Mine #1 in Buchanan County, Va. Once, coal miners were literally at war with their employers. Today, their descendants are allies in a rhetorical war playing out across eastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia and all of West Virginia. The message: They now face a common enemy - the federal government, especially the president and the Environmental Protection Agency. The war on coal is a sound bite and a headline, perpetuated by pundits, power companies and public relations consultants who have crafted a neat label for a complex set of realities, one that compels people to choose sides. (AP Photo/Bristol Herald Courier, David Crigger)

In a Saturday Oct. 13, 2012 photo, hundreds congregated along U.S. 23 from Big Stone Gap to Pound and into Kentucky in support of coal miners and the mining industry. Only a few generations ago, coal miners were literally at war with their employers, spilling and shedding blood on West Virginia's Blair Mountain in a historic battle for union representation and fair treatment. Today, their descendants are allies in a carefully choreographed rhetorical war playing out across eastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia and all of West Virginia. It's fueled by a single, unrelenting message that they now face a common enemy, the federal government, that has decided that coal is no longer king, or even noble. (AP Photo/Bristol Herald Courier, Allie Robinson)

Republican candidates are using the idea of a "war on coal" in their campaigns this year, as in this sign that targets incumbent Democratic U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin in Morgantown, W.Va., on Oct. 16, 2012. Once, coal miners were literally at war with their employers. Today, their descendants are allies in a rhetorical war playing out across eastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia and all of West Virginia. The message: They now face a common enemy, the federal government, especially the president and the Environmental Protection Agency. (AP Photo/Vicki Smith)

In this April 2010 photo, a coal miner drives a scoop while working in the Tech Leasing and Rebuild Inc. Mine #1 in Buchanan County, Va. Once, coal miners were literally at war with their employers. Today, their descendants are allies in a rhetorical war playing out across eastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia and all of West Virginia. The message: They now face a common enemy - the federal government, especially the president and the Environmental Protection Agency. The war on coal is a sound bite and a headline, perpetuated by pundits, power companies and public relations consultants who have crafted a neat label for a complex set of realities, one that compels people to choose sides. (AP Photo/Bristol Herald Courier, David Crigger)

In this Saturday Oct. 13, 2012 photo, a man speaks to the crowd at a United for Coal event in Pikeville, Ky. Once, coal miners were literally at war with their employers. Today, their descendants are allies in a rhetorical war playing out across eastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia and all of West Virginia. The message: They now face a common enemy - the federal government, especially the president and the Environmental Protection Agency. The war on coal is a sound bite and a headline, perpetuated by pundits, power companies and public relations consultants who have crafted a neat label for a complex set of realities, one that compels people to choose sides. (AP Photo/Appalachian News-Express, Elizabeth Thompson)

A truck passes a political sign in a yard in Dellslow, W.Va., on Oct. 16, 2012. Rhetoric about the administration's alleged "war on coal" has come to dominate conversation this campaign season. Once, coal miners were literally at war with their employers. Today, their descendants are allies in a rhetorical war playing out across eastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia and all of West Virginia. The message: They now face a common enemy _ the federal government, especially the president and the Environmental Protection Agency. (AP Photo/Vicki Smith)

In a Saturday Oct. 13, 2012 photo, hundreds of supporters signed the American Energy Alliance bus, which has for the past two months traveled around the country, during a United for Coal Rally in Southwest Va. Only a few generations

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ago, coal miners were literally at war with their employers, spilling and shedding blood on West Virginia's Blair Mountain in a historic battle for union representation and fair treatment. Today, their descendants are allies in a carefully choreographed rhetorical war playing out across eastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia and all of West Virginia. It's fueled by a single, unrelenting message that they now face a common enemy _ the federal government _ that has decided that coal is no longer king, or even noble. (AP Photo/Bristol Herald Courier, Allie Robinson)

FOLLOW GREEN

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EPA LIKELY FORCED TO DELAY 'CRUCIAL' BASELINE RESEARCH IN FRACKING STUDY Inside EPA Weekly Report

01/18/2013

EPA is not expecting to complete studies that prospectively monitor contamination at new hydraulic fracturing sites until after it completes its massive study of fracking impacts on drinking water, which environmentalists say may hinder the usefulness of the larger analysis because the prospective studies would have provided a crucial pre-drilling baseline to measure whether and when contamination may occur.

"If they don't have a baseline, it's going to be very difficult to come up with [conclusive findings] because they don't have anything to compare it with," one environmentalist says of the final study report, slated for release in late 2014.

Environmentalists and some Democratic lawmakers are hoping the agency's two-year, Congressionally directed study of the relationship between fracking and drinking water will provide the first documented analysis of whether and how the controversial extraction process contributes to groundwater contamination, bolstering support for stricter federal regulation of natural gas development.

The agency's study consists of a slew of research projects, including analysis of existing data, computer modeling of various scenarios, laboratory studies of treated shale gas wastewater, profiling of commonly used fracking chemicals, and a handful of case studies where EPA scientists will conduct sampling at actual drilling sites in an effort to identify potential pathways of contamination.

The case studies are separated into retrospective analyses -- in which EPA will conduct monitoring activities at five drilling sites where fracking has already occurred to attempt to review potential impacts on nearby drinking water sources -- and prospective studies, where fracking is planned but has not yet been initiated.

For the prospective case studies, EPA plans to sample groundwater near the sites prior to, and after, each stage of drilling, allowing the agency to collect baseline data so that any water quality changes that occur as the site is developed can be recorded.

However, the agency has struggled with technical and legal issues in orchestrating the plans for prospective studies with participating companies. In an interim version of the report released late last year, EPA says it anticipates that the prospective studies, which will take up to a year to complete after they have commenced, will not be available until after the final study is published, currently slated for December 2014.

"The EPA continues to work with industry partners to begin research activities at potential prospective case study locations, which involve sites where the research will begin before well construction," the Dec. 21 interim report says.

Glenn Paulson, science advisor to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, told a Jan. 8 EPA progress review of Science to Achieve Results (STAR) grant research that the agency has been forced to scrap one of the two planned prospective studies, at a Haynesville Shale site in DeSoto Parish, LA, due to technical issues. The agency will continue to work with that company to identify a new site, Paulson said.

However, for the second planned prospective case study, EPA is struggling to resolve lingering legal questions posed by the energy company that had planned on participating in the study, and "it looks like those questions can't be resolved," Paulson said, indicating that the study "likely will not go forward."

That study had been slated for a Washington County, PA site, part of the prolific Marcellus Shale that underlies

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Pennsylvania and much of the Northeast.

But legal issues arose, Paulson said, when "lawyers started to talk to each other" over EPA's request that agency scientists have access to all stages of the development, and industry attorneys raised questions over whether that would incur safety and liability risks. Paulson added that he was unconvinced that the industry concerns were valid, but that discussions appear to be at an impasse.

The retrospective studies, which are sites where groundwater contamination has been reported, are still moving forward as planned and are already underway, and EPA says those studies will help the agency better understand the underlying causes of the pollution and potential impacts to drinking water resources.

But environmentalists charge that without good baseline data to document that the groundwater was not already contaminated prior to drilling, it will be more difficult for the agency to defend any conclusions implicating fracking as the cause for contamination. Without that baseline data the environmentalist says, there remains an "information vacuum" and it is difficult for environmentalists to count industry's longstanding claims that there are no documented cases where fracking has been shown to contaminate groundwater.

And a second environmentalist, in response to EPA's release of the interim report on the fracking study, says it is "disappointing" that EPA has made so little progress in moving along the prospective case studies, and has failed to explain its lack of progress despite having launched the analysis in 2011.

"The prospective case studies are incredibly important, as they will be the first independent review of what actually happens on the ground from start to finish," the second source says.

EPA and other agencies have increasingly highlighted the importance of collecting baseline data prior to drilling, noting that a lack of background information on groundwater quality can undermine efforts to determine whether fracking or drilling activities can contribute to contamination of drinking water resources.

For example, EPA in its Dec. 8, 2011 draft report outlining contamination of an aquifer located close to Pavillion, WY, situated near gas drilling activities -- which acknowledges that the cause is likely fracking fluid -- says that its investigation highlights the importance of collecting baseline data.

The Pavillion study has been widely criticized by Republican lawmakers, industry, and state officials who argue that EPA's methodology for taking data from the contaminated aquifer was flawed and could have led to cross-contamination of the samples. EPA said in the draft report, "Collection of baseline data prior to hydraulic fracturing is necessary to reduce investigative costs and to verify or refute impacts to ground water."

While the Pavillion draft report was released in 2011, EPA recently extended the public comment period to Sept. 30, according to a notice in the Jan. 11 Federal Register. Relevant documents are available on InsideEPA.com. See page 2 for details. (Doc ID: 2421248)

But a spokesman for Encana, the energy company that drills near Pavillion, says that the delay, which is the third time EPA has extended the public comment period since the draft report's December 2011 release, is disappointing, calling it "a disservice not only to Encana, but to the people of Pavillion and the State of Wyoming."

Encana and other industry groups have urged EPA to elevate the study to a highly influential scientific assessment (HISA), which the agency declined to do on the grounds that the draft study did not fit the White House Office of Management & Budget guidelines for a HISA. EPA instead has suggested it will treat the study as an influential scientific information. -- Bridget DiCosmo

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